

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 080978

FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL RPT KINSHASA 2959 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BRUSSELS PARIS
BUJUMBURA KIGALI DAR ES SALAAM LUSAKA 28 MAR 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2959

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, CG

SUBJECT: MOBUTU EXPRESSES CONCERN FOR SECURITY OF ZAIRE'S
EASTERN BORDERS

REF: KIGALI 447 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MOBUTU EXPRESSES CONCERN RE SECURITY OF ZAIRE'S
EASTERN FRONTIERS, CITING REPORTS OF US INTENTIONS TO PROVIDE
ARMS TO FRONT LINE STATES AND BUILD-UP OF CUBAN PRESENCE IN
BURUNDI. END SUMMARY

2. DURING MEETING MARCH 25, PRESIDENT MOBUTU MADE SOMEWHAT
VAGUE REFERENCE TO STATEMENT HE UNDERSTOOD AMB. ANDREW
YOUNG HAD RECENTLY MADE ADVOCATING THAT US PROVIDE MILITARY
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ASSISTANCE TO FRONT-LINE STATES. MOBUT ASKED IF THIS REFLECTED
A SHIFT IN US POLICY; IF SO, HE WOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED
THAT ARMS PROVIDED TANZANIA MIGHT END UP IN THE HANDS OF PRP
REBELS OPERATING ALONG THE ZAIRIAN-TANZANIAN BORDER.

3. I TOLD MOBUTU I WAS UNAWARE OF ANY SUCH STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED
TO AMB. YOUNG. TO MY KNOWLEDGE US POLICY FIRMLY REMAINED ONE

OF FACILITATING A PEACEFUL, NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IN ZIMBABWE,
AND THEREBY AVOIDING A RESORT TO ARMED CONFLICT.

4. MOBUT THEN SHIFTED TO BURUNDI AND REPORTS THAT THE CUBANS WERE BEGINNING TO BUILD UP A PRESENCE THERE. HE SAID THIS, TOO, WOULD POSE A THREAT TO ZAIRE'S EASTERN REGIONS. I SAID I WAS AWARE OF SUCH REPORTS ALTHOUGH I HAD SEEN NO REAL CONFIRMATION OF SUCH A BUILD-UP. AS FOR THE PRP, I SAID IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THE ZAIRAN ARMY HAD BEEN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL IN ITS SWEEP OPERATIONS ALONG LAKE TANGANYIKA. MOBUTU CONFIRMED THIS WAS SO, MENTIONING IN THIS CONNECTION THE CONTINUED UTILITY OF PATROL BOATS PROVIDED BY THE US SOME YEARS AGO. WHEN I SAID I ALSO HAD THE IMPRESSION THERE MIGHT NOW BE BETTER COOPERATION BETWEEN BURUNDI AND ZAIRIAN AUTHORITIES IN KEEPING TRACK OF REBEL MOVEMENTS IN THE AREA, MOBUTU ACKNOWLEDGED ONLY THAT COOPERATION HAD IMPROVED "A LITTLE."

5. COMMENT: WHILE MOBUTU REMAINS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE THREAT FROM ANGOLA (SEPTTEL, IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE IS KEEPING AN ANXIOUS EYE ON ZAIRE'S EASTERN AS WELL AS SOUTHERN FLANK. FACT THE RWANDAN FOREIGN MINISTER IS SIMULTANEOUSLY EXPRESSING CONCERN TO US ABOUT SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN BURUNDI AND IN DOING SO IS STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF ZAIRE'S SECURITY AS WELL WOULD INDICATE THAT ZAIRIAN REF AND RWANDAN GOVERNMENTS MAY BE COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS TO ELICIT OUR ATTENTION. AMBASSADOR CRIGLER'S REJOINDER TO FOREIGN MINISTER'S ASSERTION
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THAT WE ARE ABANDONING THE MOBUTU REGIME WAS WELL PUT. THE MINISTER COULD BE FURTHER ASSURED BY CITING PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITIVE REPLY LAST WEEK TO MOBUTU'S LETTER APPEALING FOR SUPPORT OF THE MOBUTU PLAN, AND SUBSEQUENT EDITORIALS IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS IDENTIFYING US AS ONE OF ZAIRE'S "TRUE FRIENDS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES."

6. ACTION REQUESTED: ANY LIGHT DEPARTMENT CAN SHED ON STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO AMB. YOUNG (PARA ONE ABOVE) WOULD BE USEFUL IN OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO SET MOBUTU STRAIGHT RE US POLICY IN AFRICA.
CUTLER

UNQUOTE COOPER

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